DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 459 124 SO 033 426

AUTHOR Mitchell, Greg
TITLE Racial and Ethnic Tensions: What Should We Do? An Issue Book for National Issues Forums.
INSTITUTION National Issues Forums, Dayton, OH.
SPONS AGENCY Charles F. Kettering Foundation, Dayton, OH.
ISBN ISBN-0-945639-18-X
PUB DATE 2000-00-00
NOTE 40p.
AVAILABLE FROM Kendall/Hunt Customer Service, 4050 Westmark Drive, P.O. Box 1840, Dubuque, IA 52004-1840 ($3.60). Tel: 800-228-0810 (Toll Free); Fax: 800-772-9165 (Toll Free); Fax: 563-589-1046; e-mail: orders@kendallhunt.com. For full text: http://www.nifi.org/racialto.pdf.
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom (055)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Citizenship Education; Controversial Issues (Course Content); *Ethnic Groups; *Ethnic Relations; Group Discussion; *Racial Attitudes; *Racial Relations; Secondary Education; *Social Problems; Social Studies
IDENTIFIERS Public Discourse

ABSTRACT

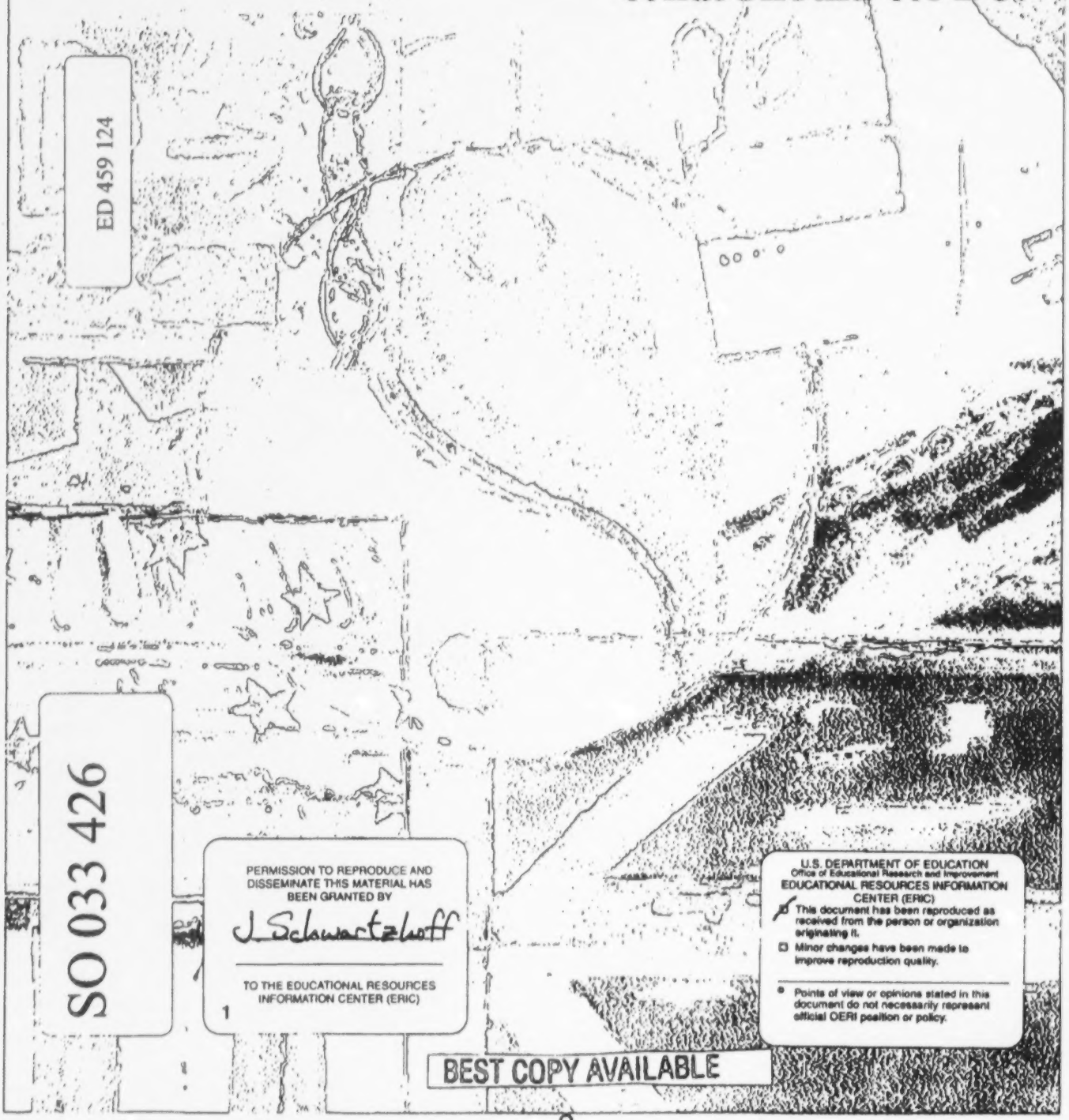
As the United States enters the 21st century, the rich diversity of its people may be its greatest promise and its greatest challenge. The country still struggles with a legacy of racial discrimination and ethnic disparity, even if their forms are subtler today. This book is designed to promote public deliberation that can help individuals find common ground for action on the troubling racial and ethnic problems that still divide the nation. The book provides an overview of the issue and outlines three approaches. Each approach speaks for one set of priorities and views and, drawing ideas from across the political spectrum, advocates a unique and consistent way of dealing with the problem. Approaches are: (1) "Look beyond Race and Ethnicity" (focus on what unites, not what divides); (2) "Build Self-Identity First" (acknowledge and accept differences); and (3) "Open All Doors to Everyone" (take an active part in finishing the job of integration). (BT)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original document.

An Issue Book for National Issues Forums

Racial and Ethnic Tensions

What Should We Do?



ED 459 124

SO 033 426

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

J Schwartzhoff

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

For the National Issues Forums

This issue book was prepared by National Issues Forums Research, in collaboration with the Kettering Foundation. Books in this series are used by civic and educational organizations interested in addressing public issues. These organizations use the books in locally initiated forums convened each year in hundreds of communities. For a description of the National Issues Forums, see Page 32. Individuals interested in using National Issues Forums materials as part of their own programs should write National Issues Forums Research at 100 Commons Road, Dayton, Ohio 45459-2777, or call 800-433-7834.

Kettering Foundation

The Kettering Foundation, a nonprofit, nonpartisan research institute based in Dayton, Ohio (with offices in Washington, D.C., and New York), was founded in 1927. It has provided books, materials, and moderator training for the National Issues Forums since this nationwide network was started in 1982. It is engaged in a wide range of activities to promote civic participation and enrich public life. For information about the Kettering Foundation, contact the foundation at 200 Commons Road, Dayton, Ohio 45459-2799. Phone: 800-221-3657.

Ordering Information

Additional copies of this book may be ordered from NIF Publications, P.O. Box 41626, Dayton, Ohio 45441; phone: 1-800-600-4060. It is part of a series that includes other topics such as violent kids, campaign spending, public schools, urban sprawl, privacy and free speech on the Internet, gambling, jobs, alcohol, physician-assisted suicide, and Social Security and Medicare. For more information or to place orders for these books, contact: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 4050 Westmark Drive, Dubuque, Iowa 52002. Phone: 800-228-0810.

Acknowledgments

Our thanks go to colleagues at the Kettering Foundation and National Issues Forums associates and others around the nation for their help in defining the issue framework, clarifying the presentation or reviewing the manuscript: Beatriz Amberman, Leland Bordeaux, Lan Calderon, Alfredo Carrasquillo, Ramon Daubon, Edwin Dorn, Richard Elkins, Cheryl Gibbs, Damon Higgins, Dennis Hartig, Lilis Hunnam Will, Bob Kingston, Chris Kloth, Betty Knighton, Jesus Lechuga, J. Roger Lee, Ceasar McDowell, Bob McKenzie, Estus Smith, Susan Willey, and Ruth Yellow Hawk.

Publisher: Edward J. Arnoldi
Writer: Greg Mitchell
Editor: Lucie Florio
Research: Deborah Wurtz, Dora Fleming
Copy Editor: Betty Trecker
Questionnaires: Julie Fisher, Ilse Tebbetts, John Cavanaugh
Production: George Cavanaugh
Production Assistant: Elizabeth Hensley

Design: Long's Graphic Design Inc.
Cover Art: Long's Graphic Design Inc.
Inside Illustrations: Long's Graphic Design Inc.

Racial and Ethnic Tensions: What Should We Do?

Copyright© 2000

National Issues Forums Institute
ISBN: 0-945639-18-X

A note about this issue book

Each book in this series for the National Issues Forums outlines a public issue and several choices or approaches to addressing the issue. Rather than conforming to any single point of view, each choice reflects widely held concerns and principles. Panels of experts review manuscripts to make sure the choices are presented accurately and fairly.

By intention, issue books do not identify individuals or organizations with partisan labels such as Democrat, Republican, conservative, or liberal. The goal is to present ideas in a fresh way that encourages readers to judge them on their merits. Issue books include quotations from experts and public officials when their views appear consistent with the principles of a given approach. But these quoted individuals might not endorse every aspect of the approach as it is described here.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Racial and Ethnic Tensions
What Should We Do?

By Greg Mitchell

Introduction 2

As this nation enters the twenty-first century, the rich diversity of its people may be America's greatest promise — and its greatest challenge. We have made great strides in breaking down barriers that once separated us. But we still struggle with a legacy of racial discrimination and ethnic disparity, even if their forms are subtler today. This book is designed to promote public deliberation that can help us find common ground for action on the troubling racial and ethnic problems that still divide us. It provides an overview of the issue and outlines three different approaches. Each approach speaks for one set of American priorities and views and, drawing ideas from across the political spectrum, advocates a unique and consistent way of dealing with the problem.

Approach 1: Look Beyond Race and Ethnicity 8

In this view, we must focus on what unites us, not on what divides us. We will all benefit if we stop seeing everything through the lens of race and ethnicity. There has been much progress in bridging racial and ethnic divides, proponents of this approach say, and there will be even more if we eliminate racial preferences, which are unfair to everyone. We must also insist that recent immigrants assimilate rapidly. In this view, we should provide equal opportunity for everyone, and treat everyone the same — as Americans.

What Should Be Done? 9

Dangers, Drawbacks, Trade-offs 13

Approach 2: Build Self-Identity First 15

We should acknowledge and accept differences, not blur them, say supporters of this view. The way to reduce ethnic and racial tensions is to first build racial and cultural identity. We will never learn to get along well with others until we first know who we are — as individuals from different cultural backgrounds. Only through ensuring that our particular group is strong and well regarded, can we relate to others. We must allow minority communities and schools to set their own course, even if it means accepting some self-segregation.

What Should Be Done? 16

Dangers, Drawbacks, Trade-offs 20

Approach 3: Open All Doors to Everyone 22

This approach calls for all of us to take an active part in finishing the job of integration. It is a job that we will have to work at by making continuous efforts to meet, talk with, and understand each other better. Proponents of this view oppose policies that encourage or accept racial or ethnic separation. Only through living, working, and going to school together — and setting common goals through community dialogue — will prejudice subside.

What Should Be Done? 23

Dangers, Drawbacks, Trade-offs 28

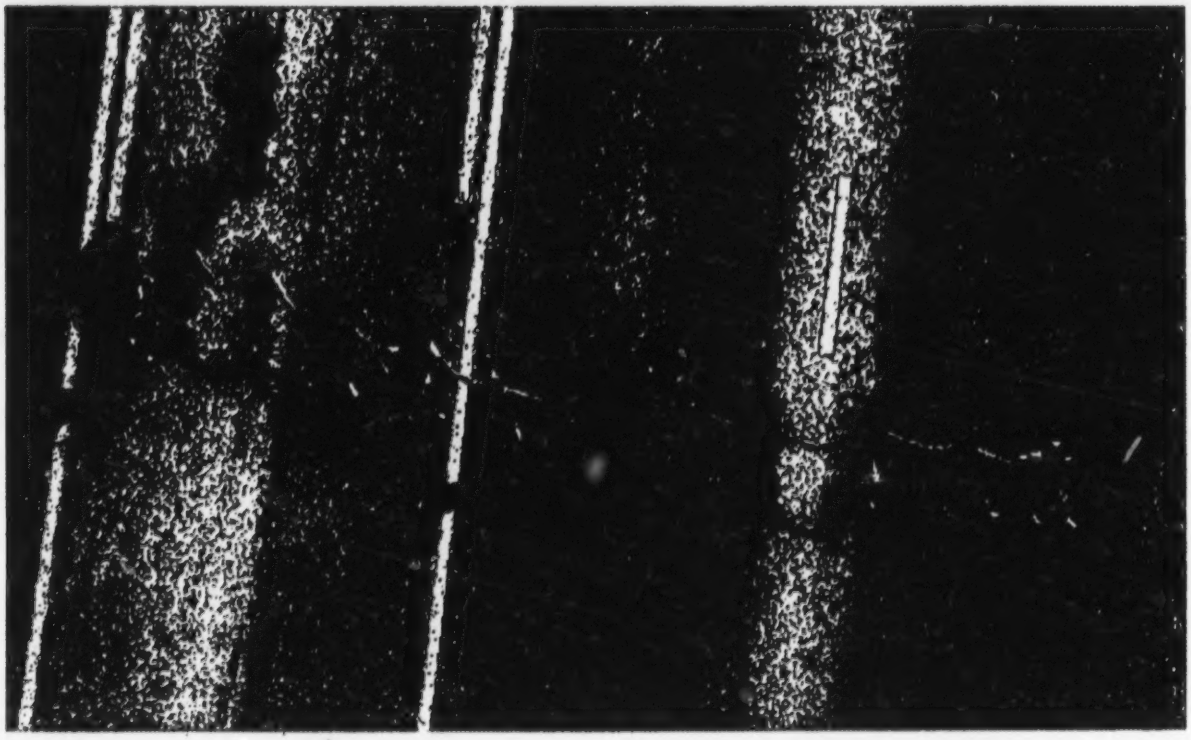
In Your Community... 29

Issue Map 30

What Are National Issues Forums? 32

Questionnaires: Register Your Views 33

Racial and Ethnic Tensions:
What Should We Do?



Los Angeles Police Department officers lead children to safer ground, away from the North Valley Jewish Community Center, where a gunman wounded five people.

As Americans we are far more united than divided. Whatever the color of our skin or country of origin we share many common values: a belief in fairness and justice and opportunity, a passionate desire for freedom. Most of us want the same things in life: safe neighborhoods, a good job that pays a fair wage, a comfortable home, adequate and affordable health care, a quality education for our children.

Often, however, racial or ethnic conflict shakes this common ground and twists the threads that bind us together in this American democracy. As our country enters the twenty-first century, diversity may be America's greatest promise — and our gravest challenge.

Today, more than ever, we are truly a society in transition. Race relations no longer focus narrowly on problems between whites and African-Americans. "The classic American dilemma has now become many dilemmas of race and ethnicity," Linda Chavez-Thompson, executive vice president of the AFL-CIO, has declared. Our national conversation on race now includes, among others, Hispanics, Asian-Americans, Native Americans, Arab-Americans and the very different nationalities within each (Cubans and Haitians, for exam-

ple). "There are problems all over the country relating to different ethnic groups," says Lana Buu-Sao, vice president of the Vietnamese Association in Orlando, Florida. "It's not just black and white." America has made great strides in relations among its diverse people. Polls show a steady decline in racial bias over the past decades and there is wide agreement on ideals of racial equality. Many see tangible signs of progress in a growing, multicolored middle-class and the large number of nonwhite elected officials.

"I really think there is a new phenomenon out there," Eddie Williams told *Newsweek* magazine. Williams heads the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, the nation's premier think tank on blacks and politics. According to the center, the number of black elected officials nearly sextupled since 1970, and is about 9,000 today. In a Joint Center poll last year, blacks were more likely than whites to say they were better off financially than the year before.

And today, America joyously celebrates the accomplishments of African-Americans. Michael Jordan, Lauryn Hill, and Colin Powell are just three examples. "If you are touched at all by American culture, your idol is likely to be black," writes Ellis Cose in *Newsweek*. "There have always been black successes and superstar achievers, but never before has black been quite so beautiful to so many admirers."

Adds Bobby William Austin, head of the nonprofit Village Foundation in Alexandria, Virginia: "When did you ever think you would see black men as heroes of white children?"

As a nation, however, we still struggle with a legacy of racial discrimination and ethnic disparity, even if their forms are subtler today. "Bigotry, for the most part, is not as blatant and obvious and outrageous as it used to be," says David Shipler, author of *A Country of Strangers*. "A lot of it has gone underground." Occasionally, it bursts to the surface, as in the case of the white racists from Jasper, Texas, who beat a black man, chained him to a bumper, and then dragged him to his death. Or in the shooting of three young boys, one only 5 years old, at a Jewish Community Center in Los Angeles. The assailant professed hatred of Jews, blacks, Hispanics, and other minorities.

Race remains America's raw nerve. Even today, roughly 10,000 hate crimes are reported to police each year, the vast majority based on racial or ethnic bias.

"It is not any one person's or faction's fault," observes psychologist James Jones of the University of Delaware. "Rather it is the deep and pervasive penetration of race into our collective psyche and social institutions." There is in America a deep-seated national consensus on the ideals of equality and integration, but a recent Ford Foundation opinion poll found that most Americans feel we are growing apart, not together. A minister in Indianapolis says, "There are no race relations. We are two different communities in two different worlds that hardly have anything to do with each other."

"Race remains America's raw nerve. Even today, roughly 10,000 hate crimes are reported to police each year, the vast majority based on racial or ethnic bias."

To be sure, this is not true everywhere. But members of different races and ethnic groupings are often disconnected from one another — socially, culturally, economically, geographically. Legal segregation may be a thing of the past but different races, for the most part, "still don't live next door to each other," according to Lani Guinier, the veteran civil rights lawyer. "We don't go to school together. We don't even watch the same television shows." Even those who work, play, and live in multicultural environments have difficulty broaching issues of race and ethnicity with those not of their same race. One black father of mixed-race children, consultant on race and ethnicity, and Ivy-league college instructor admitted he avoided discussing such issues with close friends who are white. He said he didn't know how the friendships would fare.

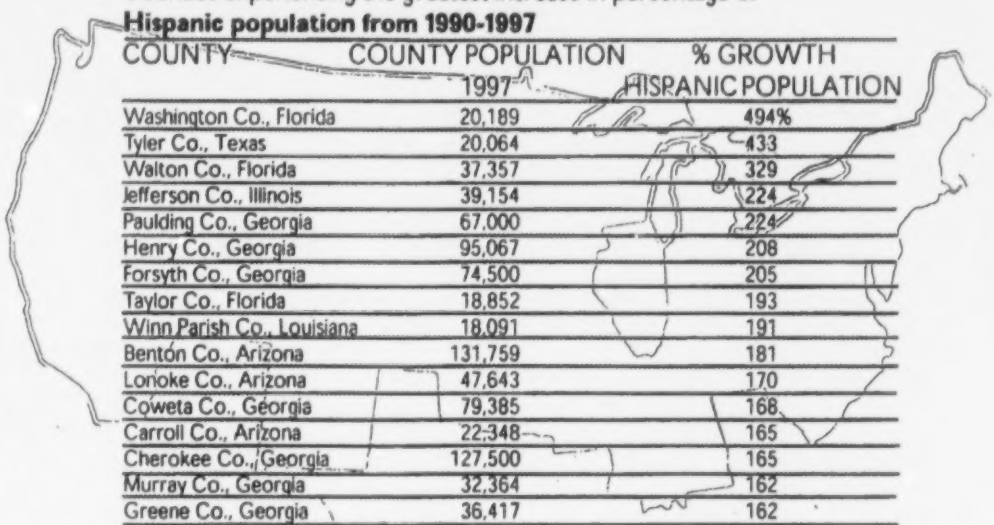
Studs Terkel, author of the book *Race*, tells the story of a white friend who was driving down a street in a black neighborhood. People on the street corners started motioning to her and she became frightened, raised her windows, and drove on. A few blocks later she realized she was driving the wrong way on a one-way street; the local residents had been simply trying to alert her.

The focus on black-white relations in this country has often overshadowed tensions involving other groups.

Racism directed against Korean-Americans or Mexican-Americans cannot be dismissed as simply a natural effect of immigration. At the same time, surveys indicate that members of minority groups

AP/Wide World Photos

Tiger Woods poses with his mother, Kultida, and the winner's trophy after capturing the U.S. Open Golf Championship.



Counties experiencing the greatest increase in percentage of **Hispanic population from 1990-1997**

COUNTY	COUNTY POPULATION 1997	% GROWTH HISPANIC POPULATION
Washington Co., Florida	20,189	494%
Tyler Co., Texas	20,064	433
Walton Co., Florida	37,357	329
Jefferson Co., Illinois	39,154	224
Paulding Co., Georgia	67,000	224
Henry Co., Georgia	95,067	208
Forsyth Co., Georgia	74,500	205
Taylor Co., Florida	18,852	193
Winn Parish Co., Louisiana	18,091	191
Benton Co., Arizona	131,759	181
Lonoke Co., Arizona	47,643	170
Coweta Co., Georgia	79,385	168
Carroll Co., Arizona	22,348	165
Cherokee Co., Georgia	127,500	165
Murray Co., Georgia	32,364	162
Greene Co., Georgia	36,417	162
Effingham Co., Arizona	34,000	162
Saline Co., Arizona	75,769	161
Washington Co., Arizona	136,621	160

Source: U.S. Census Bureau estimates

often have negative views of other minority groups — who can forget black rioters in Los Angeles in 1992 targeting Korean-owned stores? — just as damaging to racial harmony as white prejudice. Different races and ethnic groups often feel in conflict over a "fair share" of jobs,access to public housing, college admissions and political power. Even within such groupings there is prejudice and resentment — for example,between old and new immigrants,or between the poor and the middle-class.

Conflict between Vietnamese immigrants in Westminster, California, received national attention when a shop owner put up a picture of Communist leader Ho Chi Minh in his video store,and was promptly picketed and pummeled by fellow Vietnamese-Americans.

Now we face new challenges as our country becomes even more multiethnic and multiracial. Residents of several counties in the United States may represent more than 100 different racial and ethnic groups.Skin color often means less than ethnicity, language, and culture.The cultural differences between Japanese-Americans and Laotian-Americans,for example, are vast.African-Americans may have a very different heritage than immigrants with dark skin from the Caribbean,but they are all commonly labeled as "blacks."

According to recent projections,the percentage of Hispanics and Asians in the United States will double within 50 years while the percentage of whites in the population drops to roughly half. Already, the number of interracial marriages and mixed-race children is soaring.More and more of us are "blended," of mixed-race, including such celebrities as Mariah Carey and Keanu Reeves. Tiger Woods proudly declared himself a Cablinasian, recognizing his white, black,American Indian, and Asian bloodlines.

The old clichés of America as "melting pot"or "great checkerboard"are weakening. The first suggests a loss of identity, the second a separate identity. Rather, we are a wonderful mix of cultures and races,old and new immigrants,not yet thoroughly "Americanized." A white parent in Secaucus,New Jersey, recently said,"My daughter brings home the League of Nations,and I know I've become more tolerant. I think people are more and more likely to take people at the value of what they are." Young people,especially, appear less self-conscious about race.

Today, "diversity"is the word,but it means different things and suggests different policies to

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

different people. Many Americans agree that diversity — in our neighborhoods, workplaces, and schools — is ideal,but perhaps unrealistic. Others disagree about the best ways to achieve equal opportunity and racial balance. How much integration is "enough"? What kind of segregation is acceptable,even desirable — if it's voluntary?

Clearly, tolerance does not mean uniformity. We need a new language,a new way of talking about racial differences,suspicions, and conflicts. This booklet is one attempt to promote fresh and meaningful dialogue on this issue. We should remember that our national motto, ***E pluribus unum***, suggests "we are one," but also "we are striving to become one.

Even though most of us may want similar things in life, we do not all have an equal chance to achieve them. And we often disagree on how much we should look to the government to improve conditions.Social conservative columnist Cal Thomas observes, "Sure, racism exists. But the best way to reduce its impact is not to pass more laws or fund more failed government programs."

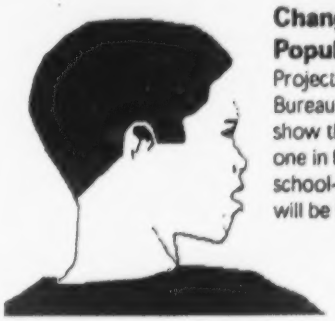
Decades ago,the eminent scholar W.E.B. Dubois predicted that the main problem of the twentieth century would be race,and at the dawn of the twenty-first century race still matters in profound ways.It can affect the ability of a citizen to receive an equal chance at securing a job, health care,education, housing,and justice in the courts. As author Michael Lind has observed,"The civil rights revolution abolished racial segregation by law, but not racial segregation by class."

Race and poverty are often linked in America. It is important to resist a strict equation,for it obscures the many racial problems in our society that exist independent of any economic factors. And,after all, whites make up almost half of those who live below the poverty line.

Still,one cannot ignore the reality of racial inequities.President Clinton has said that whites don't have to "accept blame for things that happened before you. But you do have to accept the facts of the society you live in."

- According to one report, 97 percent of top male executives are white.
- Eleven percent of all whites live in poverty, compared with 14.5 percent of Asians, 28 percent of blacks,29 percent of Hispanics — and 51 percent of Native Americans.
- A recent study revealed that about one-third of all black and Hispanic students attend schools that have 90 percent or more minority enrollment — and many of these schools offer substandard education.
- Minorities are much more likely to be victims of abuse at the hands of police,or receive what appear to be harsher sentences in the criminal justice system.
- Native Americans, meanwhile, remain America's poorest and most invisible people — except when they appear as sports mascots.

Racial stereotypes can have an effect even when an individual achieves success. Asian-Americans complain, for example, that many of them are pegged as superior technical workers — but viewed as poor managers,and so are "steered" along a narrow career path.



Changing School Population

Projections by the U.S. Bureau of the Census show that by 2050 one in four school-age children will be Hispanic.

Percent of children ages 6-18

	1995	2010	2030	2050
Whites	72%	60%	50%	49%
African-American	18%	17%	17%	20%
Hispanic	17%	20%	29%	31%
Asian	5%	5%	10%	10%
Native American	2%	2%	2%	2%

Note: Percents do not add to 100 because the Hispanic population includes members of several races.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

San Francisco Police Chief Fred Lau, center, looks on during a child safety seat demonstration in the Chinatown district of San Francisco. Lau's career rise, from the department's fifth Asian-American officer in 1971 to chief of police, is a reflection of a century of change for Chinese Americans.

Beginning the Deliberation

Americans often look at race through different lenses.Opinion polls suggest that most whites feel racial problems have largely been solved and equal opportunity exists for all,while others disagree. As legal analyst Richard Delgado points out, "White people rarely see acts of blatant or subtle racism, while minority people experience them all the time." A recent CBS News survey found that seven in ten blacks feel that improving race relations was one of the most important things we could do for the future of the country — but only about three in ten whites agree. Another survey found that 55 percent of blacks,but only 18 percent of whites, believe racial discrimination is still a very serious problem in our society. Great challenges lie ahead as the complexity, and complexion,of our society changes. Martin Luther King,Jr. declared that people hate each other because they fear each other. And why do they fear each other? Because they don't know each other. They don't know each other because they have trouble communicating with each other — because they are largely separated from each other.

This is why meaningful,national deliberations on this issue are important. Notice that we are using the word deliberations,not debate. Debates are generally limited to experts, officeholders,or media figures arguing a set position.The object of a debate is to "win"— that is, persuade others to your point of view. Those who attend debates usually just observe silently, and perhaps eventually take one side or the other.

Deliberations are something quite different. They offer an opportunity to talk about something that leads not to "victory" for one side's opinion but a better understanding of various views, cultures,and experiences,as we seek to find,wherever possible, common ground for action. They engage average citizens in the dialogue about the benefits, drawbacks, and trade-offs in different courses of action.In deliberations of this kind, the key is to listen,not just talk.

Karen Narasaki, executive director of an Asian-American legal consortium,says, "It is fitting that the Chinese character for crisis combines the symbols for danger and opportunity. I believe this is a particularly apt description of race relations in the United States today. We have an opportunity either to come together to understand one another's struggles or to let the political rhetoric drive a wedge between us."

Still, we recognize that race is a uniquely difficult and sensitive subject.Most people lack experience in talking with others about race. Many are, understandably, afraid to say the wrong thing or risk being misunderstood.After a year of holding public forums, John Hope Franklin, chairman of the advisory board of the President's Initiative on Race,said,"Often,it has been difficult to get participation from white Americans,perhaps because they feel that issues of race do not affect them."

Others are tired of talking about the problem because they feel that some people are not really listening — or they believe that talk will lead to little concrete action. (This is the voice of the powerless.) Still others feel that the less said about this subject,the better, for everyone of all races. These are all natural responses.

Yet many who do take part in these deliberations often come away with new insights and a sense that they've helped inspire understanding among others, too.Public deliberation can encourage individuals and local leaders to commit themselves to finding common goals that cross racial lines. A community can go beyond showing concern to actually taking action.

"We are so afraid of inflaming the wound that we fail to deal with what remains America's central social problem," says Harlon Dalton,author of ***Racial Healing.*** "We will never achieve racial healing if we do not confront each other, take risks, make ourselves vulnerable,put pride aside.... Many of my white friends readily embrace their

ethnic identity, or define themselves by religion, geographic region,or profession. But few spontaneously think of themselves in racial terms."

Some may feel that bringing the races together is not their responsibility. But what if our fates, in fact,are linked? If you've ever had the following experience you probably remember it quite well: Traveling abroad, you unexpectedly run into another American. Race or ethnic background suddenly means nothing and you are delighted to meet a fellow American — and proud of who you are and the country you call home. An African-American in Birmingham, Alabama,described this feeling when he noted that despite "all the bad things," if he had to choose "I wouldn't live anywhere else in the world....I still think this is the greatest place." Adds a Hispanic woman in San Jose, California: "I know we have a high level of poverty, but then we also have a lot of opportunities to leave that status.I think we are lucky." The continuous challenge,according to John Hope Franklin, is "to convince Americans across all racial and ideological lines that,given our country's increasingly diverse population, we must try to find common solutions to the problems that divide us."

A Framework for Deliberation

To promote dialogue about racial and ethnic tensions in the United States,this issue book presents three perspectives, or approaches, concerning directions we may take.Each suggests certain actions that must be taken — as well as likely trade-offs.

Approach One says that we must focus on what unites us,not what divides us. We will all benefit if we stop seeing everything through the lens of race and ethnicity. There has been much progress in race relations,this choice insists, and there will be even more if we eliminate racial preferences, which are unfair to everyone,and insist that recent immigrants assimilate rapidly. We should provide equal opportunity for everyone, but treat everyone the same — as Americans.

Approach Two says we should acknowledge and accept differences, not blur them. The way to reduce ethnic and racial tensions is to first build racial and cultural identity within the ethnic groups that comprise life in America. We will never learn to get along well with others until we first know who we are — as individuals who belong to different ethnic histories.Only through making sure that our particular group is well-regarded and strong,can we relate to others. We must allow minority communities and schools to set their own course,even if it means accepting some self-segregation.

Approach Three calls for all of us to take an active part in finishing the job of integration.It is a job that we will have to work at by making continuous efforts to meet, talk with,and understand each other better. Proponents of this view oppose policies that encourage or accept racial or ethnic separation.Only through living, working, and going to school together — and setting common goals through community dialogue — will prejudice subside.

For Further Reading/Racial and Ethnic Tensions: What Should We Do?

- Angelo N. Ancheta, *Race, Rights and the Asian American Experience,* (Piscatawney, NJ: Rutgers University Press,1998).
- Orlando Patterson, *The Ordeal of Integration: Progress and Resentment in America's "Racial" Crisis,* (Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint Press,1997).
- David Shipley, *A Country of Strangers: Blacks in America,* (New York: Alfred Knopf,1997).
- Studs Terkel, *Race,* (New York: Random House Value,1995).

Look Beyond Race and Ethnicity

A member of the Native American Fire Fighting crew studies the hot spots left by a fire that burned in Oklahoma.

It was the most heated school board meeting in the recent history of Santa Barbara. More than 600 residents showed up and emotions over the issue at hand — bilingual education — were at such a fever pitch, the city had posted six police officers in the auditorium.

Like much of the rest of California,Santa Barbara,a historic city of 90,000,has experienced a rapid increase in the number of Hispanic residents in the past 20 years.Hispanics now make up almost one-third of the city's population,but many of them, recent arrivals in the United States,have had trouble assimilating. Their median income is well below that of whites and in local elementary schools more than half of the Hispanic children were enrolled in bilingual programs — taught in Spanish for several years while they slowly gained proficiency in English.

By 1998,however, most residents of Santa Barbara,including many Hispanic families,had come to believe that bilingualism was not working. Some of the students who emerged from the classes still had difficulty learning English and frequently retreated to their native tongue. Test scores remained low. Several school board members wondered if it was fair to give Hispanics special support not formerly granted to other ethnic groups. Some white parents felt the Hispanic children were being "coddled"and believed bilingualism was harming their children — by tying up resources and preventing all kids from mixing freely and easily.

"This is a multilayered debate," says school board member Robert Pohl,an educational consultant."It's about politics. It's about culture.And it's about what is the purpose and responsibility of the school system." On that night in January 1998, the Santa Barbara board ultimately voted to restrict bilingual education, meaning that all Spanish-speaking children would soon start taking

classes where English took precedence. Five months later, voters throughout California overwhelmingly passed Proposition 227, a state ballot initiative limiting bilingual education to one year. It affects not just Hispanics but those of other foreign origin who comprise the 1.4 million children in the state for whom English is a second language. (Ten other states mandate bilingual education, and programs are under fire in many of them.) The initiative had broad-based support, even attracting the backing of 40 percent of the state's Hispanics. "I honestly believe the only way to learn English is to be immersed in it," said Steve Feria of Los Angeles. "I wouldn't have a job as a flight instructor if I didn't have the proper English skills."

But no matter how they voted, parents agreed that whether you hail from Seoul or Mexico City the key to thriving in America is to learn English and adapt to other aspects of American culture as quickly as possible.

Treat Everyone the Same

Those who support the first approach believe strongly in this "One America" idea. For them, the American melting pot still exists. While they recognize that there are cultural differences between racial and ethnic groups, they believe that our Americanism unites us. As we enter a new century, they say, we must focus on what unites us, not what divides us, and attempt to finally achieve Martin Luther King, Jr.'s dream of a truly "colorblind" society.

This is especially important today. Because of increased immigration, 40 percent of our Hispanic population and 60 percent of our Asian population are foreign born. In his book, ***Dictatorship of Virtue***, Richard Bernstein observes that assimilation worked pretty well for millions of people in the past and continues to work for the many new arrivals who flock — legally and otherwise — to our shores every year. Allowing the poor and the disadvantaged to "ignore the standards and modes of behavior that have always made for success in American life is more than mere silliness," he adds. "It is a lie."

> **"All men should be judged by their character, not by the color of their skin." — Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**

Indeed, Americans have been looking at society through the lens of race and ethnicity far too long, according to this first approach. We must let it go, and stop blaming so many social problems on racial prejudice or ethnic differences.

What Should Be Done?

- Focus on and celebrate our common Americanism. Reject the emphasis on multiculturalism and ethnic students in high schools and colleges. Return to an emphasis on American values.
- Insist that English is the one, official language of the United States. Severely limit or abolish bilingual education. Expect recent immigrants to assimilate as quickly as possible and not cling to their own language and customs.
- Eliminate affirmative action programs and quotas related to race. Hire the best-qualified applicants for jobs without regard to race or ethnicity. Eliminate double standards for all in school admissions.
- Enforce civil rights and antidiscrimination laws so that everyone has an equal opportunity to compete.
- Enact standards for performance in school and on the job to which everyone must aspire and upon which everyone is judged. Abandon school integration and busing programs based solely on achieving racial balance. Focus on improving education in all schools.

Racism is a terrible fact of our history but it does not determine the actions or beliefs of many people today — and it holds back everyone if we continue to act as though it does, say those who favor the first approach. Therefore, we should focus on the present, and reject the race-based policies and preferences that have done more harm than good.

William Raspberry, a well-known columnist who is African-American, calls it a "myth" that "race is of overriding importance, that it is a determinant not just of opportunity but also of potential, a reliable basis for explaining political and economic realities ... and the overwhelming basis on which to deal with the relationships between us." Therefore, we should treat people of different backgrounds equally but as individuals, not primarily as members of a racial or ethnic group. Civil rights statutes must be strictly enforced but racial preferences eliminated. This will promote self-respect, ease resentments, and repair the fabric of our society that unites us all.

If we want the benefits of community, we must accept, even embrace, conformity. An immigrant from Korea, for example, should try to quickly become more American than Asian — and then strive to become more American than Asian-Amer-

Linfield College student Ryan Harris, second from left, is joined by fellow students during a rally to protest his beating by three white men. Harris suffered a concussion after he was attacked by the men yelling racial epithets who left him bleeding and unconscious in the street.

ican. In this vein, essayist Richard Rodriguez proposes a bumper sticker that reads: "Assimilation Happens."

Not along ago, Louisiana Governor Mike Foster approved an order banning affirmative action in certain state agencies — and on the same day signed a bill making Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday a state holiday. He said he could find nothing in Dr. King's writings indicating that "he wanted reverse discrimination. He just wanted an end to all discrimination based on color." King believed "all men should be judged by their character," he added, "not by the color of their skin."

We Are Ready to Do This

Those who favor the first approach believe America is ready for this approach because our society has made steady progress in overcoming prejudice and promoting equality. At a recent public forum, Abigail Thernstrom, coauthor of the book *America in Black and White*, declared that ordinary Americans of all backgrounds "are living together, they're working together, they're dining together, they're forming interracial friendships ... America is outgrowing its racial past." A Gallup poll showed that the number of whites who said they would move if blacks in large numbers moved to their neighborhood declined from almost 80 percent in 1958 to less than 20 percent in the 1990s. And there is even greater hope for the future. "I think American young people are going to be redefining the very stolid old Crayolas that we have been coloring America," says Richard Rodriguez. A recent survey showed that two out of three young African-Americans and three out of four young whites believe they deal with people of different races better than their parents did — and there is evidence that this is true. Large numbers of young people are, indeed, dating across races and cultures, and mixing socially with a broad range of friends.

Polls show that more than 80 percent of whites now accept interracial marriage. Roughly one-third of Hispanics and Asians are already in "mixed" marriages. Racial and ethnic differences will continue to lose significance because of what is known as "the blending of America" — as this country, which has been mainly black and white, becomes largely tan or brown in the next century.

Clear Progress for Minorities

Another hopeful sign is that race and poverty no longer deserve to be mentioned in the same sentence,advocates of Approach One argue.Most members of minority groups are not impoverished. In fact, the number of middle-class Hispanics and African-Americans has grown significantly. Members of all races have gained prominence in business, government, the media, sports,and entertainment,and most have achieved success through traditional American methods of hard work and persistence,not because of preferential treatment.

"What is important is that opportunities be made available to all persons, regardless of race or ethnicity," Linda Chavez of the Heritage Foundation declares."Ultimately, though,it is up to individuals to take advantage of those opportunities."

Consider the city of Memphis, Tennessee, once racially segregated, and the site of Martin Luther King,Jr.'s assassination. It now has a black mayor, black congressman,black school superintendent, and black police director. A local survey found that more than one-third of its residents live in racially mixed neighborhoods.

"In our generation we have moved from denying a black man service at a lunch counter to elevating one to the highest military office in the nation and to being a serious contender for the presidency," says Colin Powell,the former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

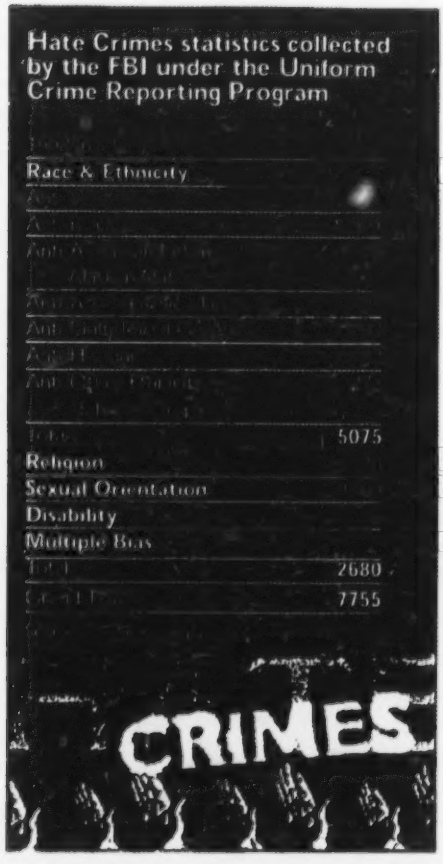
"This is a magnificent country, and I am proud to be one of its sons." Although many Hispanics, especially recent arrivals in America,struggle in poverty, "most Hispanics are making clear progress into the economic and social mainstream," according to Linda Chavez.

Asian-Americans have been called the "model minority" for this reason: they are outperforming whites in schools and have a higher median income. Why are they, as a group,thriving while many African-Americans languish? According to William Raspberry, too many blacks believe that "racism accounts for our shortcomings." Most Asian-Americans,in contrast,feel "their own efforts can make the difference, no matter what white people think."

In the view of many who support this first approach,preferential programs such as affirmative action (when applied on racial grounds) often

AP/ Wide World Photos

AFL-CIO Executive Vice-President Linda Chavez-Thompson speaks at a forum on immigrant worker



do more harm than good,and therefore should be eliminated.Erroll Smith, a black California businessman, says he can't understand why we abandoned "the mission of striving toward a color-blind society.... I thought that was the essence of Martin Luther King,Jr.'s movement.When did the game change? Who changed the rules?"

Why should racial preferences be eliminated? Proponents of Approach One argue:

- They are inevitably unfair, as qualified members of one racial or ethnic group must suffer for the sake of others.
- They put groups in competition with each other.
- Preferences send the wrong message,implying that certain individuals are inferior and require special treatment to succeed.

Black essayist Shelby Steele labels it "protectionism." Setting the bar lower often rewards "mediocrity"and leads to "an enlargement of self-doubt"among its beneficiaries,he argues, for it "tells us that racial preferences can do for us what we cannot do for ourselves."

Our history shows that people of any background who are willing to work hard,stay out of trouble, and assimilate will find success,according to this first approach. All of us must stand on our own two feet, as did those who came before, and be judged on merit,not where our parents came from or the color of our skin.Americans believe in a fair shake for everyone.What they resent is an unfair advantage.

The San Francisco school system recently agreed to eliminate quotas that mandate the number of students at each school according to race or ethnicity. This was in response to a lawsuit by Chinese-American students who had been turned away from good schools solely because the quota for their group had been filled. "Can you imagine, as a parent, seeing your son's hopes denied in this way [due to quotas] at the age of 14?"the mother of one of those students asked."He was depressed and angry that he was rejected because of his race."

There must be equality of opportunity — but not a guarantee of equality of results. The rules of the game should be the same for everyone.The outcome depends on how well individuals play the game. Shelby Steele suggests that, instead of preferences, we should develop social policies "that are committed to two goals: the educational and economic development of disadvantaged people, regardless of race."

> **"There must be equality of opportunity — but not a guarantee of equality of results. The rules of the game should be the same for everyone."**

One Set of Standards for All

Schools should treat all students equally. Those who favor the first approach call for raising standards in schools for all students,not setting the bar lower for some based on racial or cultural assumptions.Revising standards or changing teaching methods because some students "learn differently"than others because of their background only leads to diminished expectations — and results.

Some of the initial results in the aftermath of the California vote against bilingual education support this view. Glenn Heap,a second grade teacher at Heliotrope Elementary School in Los Angeles,

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

who once taught 80 percent in Spanish but now teaches 90 percent in English, reports, "I've been pleasantly surprised." The Hispanic children, he predicts, are "going to score higher in their tests. By the time they're seniors, their SAT scores will be higher because they'll have had 10 years of academic exposure to English."

A Hispanic resident of that city, George Ramos, says simply, "This is America. Everyone is supposed to speak English." Recognizing that too many "A" students are actually getting a "C" education, fifteen big city school districts, including six of the seven largest, recently set higher standards in reading and math. Educators in these cities explained that they were tired of being told their children can't learn, or can't overcome obstacles. And they were also tired of low test scores, high drop-out rates, and students earning diplomas they can't read.

"We must not replace the tyranny of segregation with the tyranny of low expectations," President Clinton said. Back in the 1980s, when many states stiffened requirements for graduation, critics predicted that students would drop out of school in droves. Instead, most students stayed in school, took the new, tougher courses — and passed them.

A 1998 study by Public Agenda, a nonpartisan research firm, discovered that "white and black parents have unambiguous and virtually indistinguishable agendas for their children's schools. Top-notch staff, involved parents and schools that guarantee basics, set high standards, ensure safety and order — these are what parents, black and white, are seeking."

What most parents do not consider a priority, according to this approach, are so-called "multicultural" programs. Rather than focusing on American culture and values, our common Americanism, "ethnic studies" promote separatism by highlighting the differences between us, proponents of this approach argue. And, as Dr. Bradford Wilson, executive director of the National Association of Scholars, complains, they often treat racial and ethnic identity as the "defining characteristic of an individual." A high school in Inglewood, California, had to shut down one day in 1998 when a riot between black and Hispanic students broke out. The Hispanic students apparently resented the fact that the school marked a Black History Month but set aside only one day to celebrate Cinco de Mayo.

Like bilingual education, multiculturalism may be well meaning but it delays or discourages entry into the American mainstream. There are, indeed, certain cultural norms to respect — certain things everyone needs to know and do — if one is to succeed in America. As journalist Jim Sleeper puts it, we ought to "nurture some shared American principles and bonds that strengthen national belonging...." A recent national poll on "diversity" sponsored by the Ford Foundation found that 86 percent agreed that "these days, people spend too much time talking about their differences rather than what they have in common."

Let Go of It

People who favor this first approach admit that it can be difficult adjusting to a "One America" concept, but it will pay off in the long run.

Consider the case of Cuban-Americans, they say. Four decades after many began fleeing Castro's Cuba, their earnings and educational achievements nearly match the U.S. average. Most own their own homes and they now exert considerable political power where they live. "Their accomplishments in the U.S. mainly are attributable to diligence and hard work," affirms Linda Chavez.

Dangers, Drawbacks, Trade-offs

- The cultural split between races and ethnic groups will grow even wider. Some neighborhoods and schools will resegregate. This will increase tensions and conflict.
- Recent immigrants will suffer. Some are simply not ready to speak English exclusively at school or on the job. Demanding that new arrivals assimilate immediately ignores roadblocks in present-day America that were not so common years ago, including the lack of well-paying jobs.
- Without affirmative action and other remedial programs, minorities (who have been making economic progress in America) will fall back again. If there were no longer any "breaks" for minorities, would they get much help, freely given? And the private sector is still rife with discrimination.
- While economic conditions are indeed improving for many minorities, so is the poverty rate for many groups. Simply enforcing civil rights statutes will not address the problem of poverty, which is a major cause of racial and ethnic tensions.

"No government action can replace the motivation and will to succeed that propels genuine individual achievement." New arrivals among Cuban immigrants — light-skinned and dark, poor and middle-class — have worked to save money and establish businesses ranging from restaurants to banks. And they've done it without a lot of special "breaks," according to proponents of this approach.

"Our civic culture cannot be blueprinted or parceled out along race lines," Jim Sleeper observes. "We affirm individual dignity when we refuse to treat any citizen as the delegate of a subculture or race. Our best leaders are those who show their neighbors, every day, how to leave subgroup loyalties at the doors of classrooms, jury rooms, hiring halls, and loan offices."

In June 1863, five months after the Emancipation Proclamation, Frederick Douglass asked whether "the white and colored people of this country [can] be blended into a common nationality, and enjoy together ... under the same flag, the inestimable blessings of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, as neighborly citizens of a common country." He answered: "I believe they can." That dream, nearly 140 years later, can still be realized if we are willing to let race go.

Gen. Colin Powell, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and his wife Alma participate in his retirement ceremony. Powell stepped down as the nation's top military officer, hailed by President Clinton simply as "first and foremost, a good soldier."

For Further Reading /Look Beyond Race and Ethnicity

- Dinesh D'Souza, *The End of Racism* (Riverside, NJ: Simon and Schuster Trade, 1996).
- Shelby Steele, *Content of Our Character: A New Vision of Race in America* (New York: HarperCollins, 1991).
- Stephen and Abigail Thernstrom, *America in Black and White: One Nation Indivisible* (Riverside, NH: Simon and Schuster Trade, 1997).

Build Self-Identity First

A young Hispanic dancer entertains the crowd at an annual cultural celebration.

It's a sunny Sunday afternoon in Arlington, Texas, but 13-year-old Anthony Do is not outside playing ball or at home playing a computer game. Instead he is sitting in class at St. Matthew's Catholic Church, as he has done for the past five years of Sundays, learning Vietnamese as a second language.

And he's not alone. The first class in 1978 drew 50 students. Now more than 400 take part. Twenty volunteer teachers run the program. The Asian-American population of Arlington has more than quadrupled since 1980 and today about 4,000 Vietnamese live in this city.

Anthony is a typical student. His mother, Tina, comes from Vietnam but he was born in America and was raised to speak English only and adapt completely to American culture. But this left a gaping void. Sometimes his mother spoke Vietnamese at home and he didn't always understand her. In addition, he knew little about Vietnamese culture. Friends didn't know how to respond to him, and he didn't quite know what to make of himself.

That was the main reason the Vietnamese elders in the church created the program — to help shape identity and build self-esteem. If children don't understand or feel positive about their heritage it is unlikely they will feel good about themselves overall. "We want the children to function in American society; but still be Vietnamese — be well rounded," explains Chieu Tran, a member of a Vietnamese-American group at the church. "We want them to be successful."

Sam Ho, a leader of the large Vietnamese community in Orange County, California, agrees that it is vital to assimilate — but just part way. Vietnamese will only feel "comfortable with themselves," he believes, if they maintain their culture and language even while aspiring to join mainstream America.

A Patchwork Quilt of Cultures

Supporters of this second approach feel this "bicultural" or "pluralistic" concept is the proper one for all racial and ethnic groups. They feel it is very much the "American way." Where the first approach sees a melting pot, backers of the second approach describe a beautiful patchwork quilt — all colors and types of Americans joining together to form one society whose separate parts maintain their own identity and values. Those who favor this view maintain that this is what it's always been like in America, as previous generations of Irish and Italian immigrants, for example, have shown.

"Well, I am an American," says Antonia Hernandez, president of the Mexican-American Legal Defense and Education Fund in California, "and I like chili, and instead of apple pie I like flan, and

What Should Be Done?

- Let communities choose school curricula and textbooks that reflect their history, values, and culture.
- Support charter and community schools that work, even if the students are overwhelmingly one race.
- Establish government and private programs that build "local potential" by creating more "empowerment zones" and offer "microenterprise" grants to small businesses and individuals. Banks must make loans and help develop neighborhoods. Give companies tax credits to provide more support for community projects. Give communities the opportunity and the money to build their own institutions and improve their schools.
- Require schools to teach students how to interact with people different from themselves and function as good citizens and neighbors. Companies should initiate diversity programs that include staff education to build mutual understanding and respect among workers of different backgrounds.
- Devote time, space, and money to celebratory and educational festivals that focus on ethnic groups and their cultures.
- Recognize American Indian tribal sovereignty and treaty rights and economic and educational development.
- Allow — even encourage — members of various races and ethnic groups to form their own social, political, cultural, educational, and business organizations. This helps them to set their own agenda.

that doesn't make me less of an American."

In this view, we cannot alleviate racial problems by attempting to be "colorblind" or pretending that we are all alike. Rather, we must first respect the right of others to be different, and recognize that assimilation can be a threat to identity. Everyone just wants a chance to find their moment in the sun. And we can only relate well to others if we first make sure that our own cultural group is respected and strong.

Tolerance and diversity have long characterized America. The novelist Herman Melville once proclaimed, "we are not a narrow tribe." The poet Walt Whitman asked Americans to listen to the "varied carols" being sung across the land.

Latino scholars Albert Camarillo and Frank Bonilla propose a new kind of "cultural citizenship" that elevates each ethnic identity to a level plane — with no second-class citizens, cultural or otherwise. They urge Americans to see themselves "not in contentious ways but as cultural citizens of a nation with connected and interdependent cultural communities that constitute the whole."

Integration alone does not solve most social problems. That's why we need to strengthen minority communities and give them a chance to mold their own future, supporters of the second approach say. All Americans will benefit — even if integration sometimes has to take a back seat to autonomy.

Human Nature and Comfort Levels

Writer H.Y. Nahm recently posed this question: How can Asian-Americans be more central in American society? "The answer is simple — Be more Asian," he declared. "America doesn't need more white-wannabes any more than it needs more second-rate burger joints. What it needs more of are first-rate Asians who glory in what they are. Freedom from the fear of being different is what makes an American. Giving others the room to be different makes us good Americans. Those who get off by putting down someone for being different is a good definition of a bad American."

In fact, members of each race or ethnic group usually choose to associate mainly with one another, in groups such as the Sons of Italy. This is human nature and so long as it is voluntary it can lead to a much-needed strengthening of identity. At many colleges there are black dorms and Hispanic student unions. No matter what we "ought" to do, this "herding instinct" and desire for a certain amount of cultural separatism remains strong — and it provides a better "comfort level" for all. Without that comfort level, racial tension will not subside, say people who favor Approach Two.

Christina Ibarrra, a student at the University of Akron (Ohio), feels that "certain segregation is okay. If people feel more comfortable with their own race, then that's fine, as long as you don't put down other races." Forced segregation, of course, is wrong, but "separate but equal" is often acceptable, if it is voluntary.

For Manning Marable, professor of history at Columbia University, "All-black or all-Latino neighborhoods in themselves are not the problem ...." The problem is the substandard level of housing, health care, jobs, and schools in many of those neighborhoods. The overriding goal, for him, is not integration, but rather "equality.... If integration helps us get there, fine. If not, other tools must be employed."

The Case for Charter Schools

Consider North Carolina's Healthy Start Academy, one of more than 50 charter schools in the state. It was set up in the basement of a church to attract students who would normally attend unresponsive and substandard public schools. In just one year it gained renown for raising test scores and attendance rates. In the fall of 1997, the school's incoming second graders tested at the 34th percentile nationally; by the following May they had climbed to the 75th percentile. Healthy Start's kindergartners, meanwhile, soared to the 99th percentile, among 5 million students tested nationwide. When headmaster Thomas Williams announced those results at a school assembly, "moms were crying," he reports, "Grandmas and grandpas were crying and yelling."

How do they do it? "We fly in the face of all the bureaucratic excuses," Williams explains. "We hold up a lantern of expectations. We say to students: It's this high. Reach it. And they do."

There's just one problem: Many educators in the state are alarmed because, of the 168 students at the school, only 2 are white. Even though the school does not discriminate against nonblacks it violates the state requirement that each charter school "reasonably reflect" its community's ethnic diversity. In fact, almost one-third of the charter schools in the state are overwhelmingly black. Most of the parents enrolled the children in these schools to flee poor public schools.

The 1998 education study by Public Agenda discovered that to achieve high standards in their schools both black and white parents would accept racially unbalanced schools.

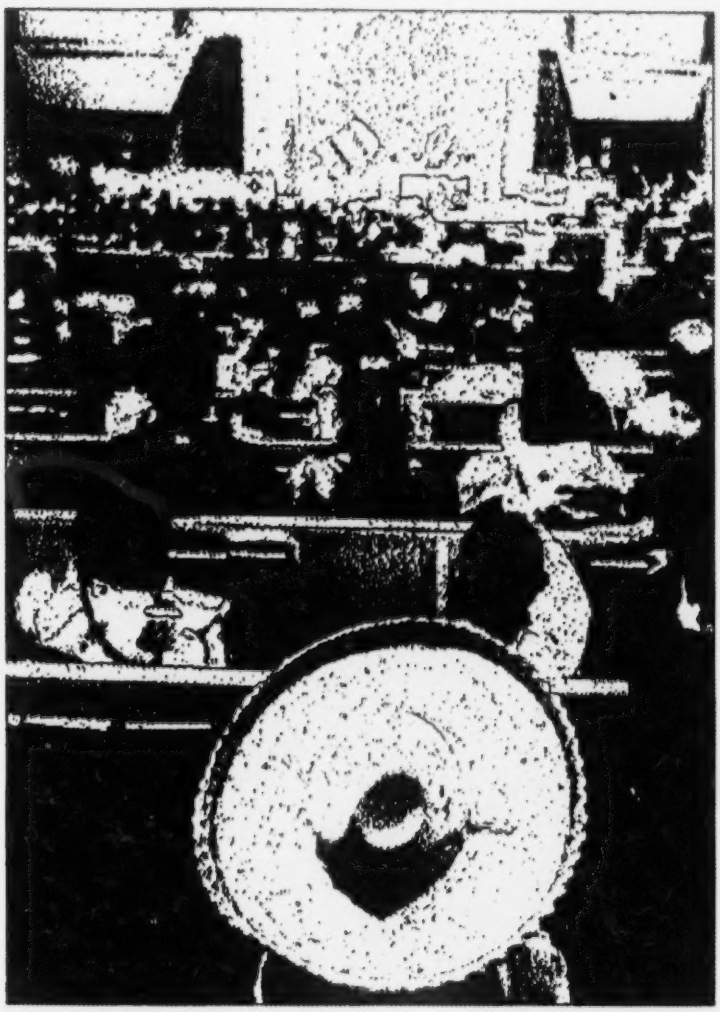
John Wilson, executive director of the largest teacher's union in the state, warns, "I think if a school ends up segregated, yes, it should be closed down." State legislators vow to do just that. One of them says, "I don't want my tax dollars to pay for an all-white system or an all-black system. My whole belief is the only way you are going to have racial harmony in this country is for people to know each other, and schools are a means to do that."

But those who support these schools say parents should have the right to seek the best education for their children. A Healthy Start parent says, "I do know as a matter of fact my daughter's getting a better education and that's the bottom line for me right now."

Indeed, the 1998 education study by Public Agenda discovered that to achieve high standards

AP/Wide World Photos

Third graders at Nampa Charter School in Nampa, Idaho, act out a poem. Each day, they recite a poem about a desirable character trait, such as kindness or a strong work ethic.



Thousands of Hispanics gather at church for the annual Our Lady of Guadalupe festival, a Spanish Catholic tradition.

in their schools both black and white parents would accept racially unbalanced schools.A high majority of African-Americans said that "schools work so hard to achieve integration that they end up neglecting their most important goal — teaching kids." In fact, recent research indicates that desegregating schools has not significantly improved academic achievement for minorities. This means, according to this second approach, increasing our commitment to charter or magnet schools,such as Healthy Start — even if racial composition is unbalanced — and supporting the use of "vouchers"that enable students in poor public schools to attend private schools. In Milwaukee, Wisconsin, for example,this will enable some 15,000 children from low-income families to attend one of 122 private schools in the city.

Building Identity, Building Community

One of the areas in which this second approach differs strongly from the first concerns history.

As we have seen, backers of the first approach feel that we must turn the page and "move beyond race." But others feel that we cannot put race aside until we recognize that what happened in the past partly explains why discrimination and racial inequalities persist in our society. Every minority group shares a common history of some crippling form of discrimination: for example,the cruel treatment of Native Americans,the enslaving of blacks,the oppression of Mexican-Americans and other Hispanics,the forced labor of Chinese-Americans,and the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II.

As historian John Hope Franklin says, "The beginning of wisdom is knowledge, and without knowledge of the past we cannot wisely chart our course for the future." Those who favor the second approach feel that problems in the past explain why minorities today need extra opportunities to develop their own culture and communities.

In this view, it is vital for each racial and ethnic group to study and celebrate its own traditions.It is too much to expect most Americans to understand the differences between so many cultures and ethnicities. "What people don't understand is that I'm Puerto Rican," explains Anna Arroyo, a premed student at the University of Akron. "I'm not Bolivian,I'm not Peruvian, I'm not Mexican and," she added, "I don't understand their culture either.... All I know is Puerto Rico." In fact,the board of the President's Initiative on Race found in its meetings around the country that many Americans know little about their increasingly multihued fellow citizens.

But it is vital,according to this second approach,that all of us at least respect our differences and allow others to celebrate their own cultures and build their own identities and communities — through everything from private clubs to Black Studies departments — even if that leads to more separatism.

Indeed,both whites and minorities must be prepared to live effectively in a world whose population is multicultural.Children especially need to know that "there are so many different people these days," a white Texas mom said at a recent focus group.Therefore, schools should teach students how to interact with people different than

Charlotte Observer

This manager of a Vietnamese restaurant says a variety of people come into his place for lunch and dinner.

themselves and how to function as good neighbors.

Bilingual programs should continue for they often serve an important role in a culture. A mother who immigrated from India comments, "When they come to this country it's sort of a mental shock. So why do we want to scare the kids? Give them one or two years [of bilingual education]."

Native Americans face a unique challenge. Many live on remote reservations and their tribes are not respected as nations because non-Indians do not understand the sovereignty granted to them by the United States. Nor do they understand the importance Native Americans place on the need to maintain what's left of their homelands. To some people, the image of the American Indian derives strictly from sports mascots or nicknames — Braves, Chiefs, Redskins.

Bilingual programs should continue for they often serve an important role in a culture.

"If your memory of us is a mascot we'd rather not be remembered," says Hector Pacheco, a California Indian activist. "I am flesh. I take offense at these symbols." John Orendorff, one of his colleagues at the American Indian Education Commission in Los Angeles, feels that people "love us as long as we're doing crafts or dancing. But land issues? Violation of civil rights? It makes them very uncomfortable." Perhaps that is why so many Native Americans fiercely defend their right to be self-governing and maintain their own cultures, religions, languages, and traditional practices.

Diversity in the workplace must also be respected, even encouraged, supporters of the second approach argue. After all, it is on the job where most of us come in contact with others of different races. Diversity programs often include staff education to build mutual respect among workers of varied backgrounds, and encourage outreach to minority contractors.

A recent diversity effort in California brought together such major companies as Wells Fargo Bank, GTE, and Pacific Gas and Electric. The executive director of the Greenlining Institute, which organized the effort, comments, "These companies know that embracing diversity gives them a competitive edge for both attracting and keeping customers, and hiring qualified employees."

Companies need not embrace affirmative action programs or quotas, but should set hiring goals. This is simply good business as our increasingly multiracial society engages a global economy.

Dangers, Drawbacks, Trade-offs

- Segregation in much of our society is already spreading, even without additional encouragement. It sustains stereotypes or creates new ones. This approach will widen the distance between ethnic and racial groups.

- Multicultural or ethnic studies can cause as much resentment as understanding when it is forced on people. And where does it stop? There simply isn't enough time in schools to study dozens of ethnic groups.

- Encouraging minorities to form their own clubs and organizations condones discrimination and separatism. For example, white country clubs might feel more comfortable excluding black members. "Reverse racism," real or imagined, has a mushrooming effect.

- Charter schools that become segregated may succeed academically in the short run, but in the long run, students suffer from not being exposed to children from other backgrounds and cultures.

- "Empowerment zones" are limited in scope and can improve only scattered communities and individuals. Allowing communities to administer private or government programs with little outside interference often leads to waste and other abuses.

- Attempting to force the entertainment industry and the media to treat all groups fairly opens the door to "political correctness," and censorship, and threatens First Amendment rights.

Daniel Yankelovich, the public opinion analyst, comments: "Affirmative action is a code for a set of practices that are seen as zero-sum, where somebody wins and somebody loses. Diversity isn't seen that way. Diversity is seen as everyone wins, as advancing the goals that everyone embraces."

Overcoming Media Stereotypes

Although the media and motion pictures are far more diverse than they once were, with many minority reporters and actors, they continue, at the same time, to perpetuate stereotypes of the industrious Asian, the lazy Hispanic, the violence-prone African-American. "Not all Indians wear headdresses, hold pow-wows, carry hatchets," complains Jason Giles, member of the Muskogee Creek tribe in Wisconsin.

This is particularly damaging to young people. A recent survey of 1,200 racially diverse children revealed that they wanted to see all races portrayed "more often, more fairly, more realistically, and more positively." These children, Approach Two suggests, must be given the ability to distinguish between an image on the screen and reality, if the races are to come together in this country.

Former New Jersey Governor Thomas Kean, a member of the advisory board for the President's Initiative, criticized the board for not accentuating the role of television. "We know in every area we've dealt with that the electronic media is still the source of stereotypes and misconceptions," Kean said. "We know that prejudice is learned. We're not born with it. If you don't address the primary teaching tool — which unfortunately is television rather than school — then you're not doing your job."

People become captives of what they have seen, not what they know. Bill Cosby has charged that television and movies ignore racial prejudice while perpetuating racist stereotypes that "keep us estranged from the rest of the country." We imagine most things before we experience them.

"People cannot talk to each other if they are influenced by stereotypes and half-truths about other Americans who, though they live, shop, work, and raise their children in the same communities, are 'different' from themselves," according to Manning Marable. Before we can realize Martin Luther King, Jr.'s dream of a society grounded in human equality, he observes, we must find ways to promote accurate cultural and social images "that illuminate the real problems experienced by people of color" in America today.

Helping Hands of Business and Commerce

None of these steps, however, will solve social problems that afflict minorities. How to help alleviate economic inequality? Government and private programs, according to the second approach, should focus on empowering minority communities — not necessarily by integrating them and certainly not tearing them down, but keeping them intact and making them truly livable.

- Build "local potential" by creating more "empowerment zones" and offer "microenterprise" grants to small businesses and individuals.
- Tax credits and other benefits would permit corporations to provide more support for community projects.
- Banks must help develop neighborhoods even if they remain basically segregated.
- Give community leaders the opportunity, and the public and private money, to build their neighborhoods — and Native American reservations — and improve their schools.

For example, the Start-Up program in East Palo Alto, California, puts together aspiring business people from low-income communities who've had trouble raising capital, with students from the business school at nearby Stanford University, and also provides grants. In Phoenix, Arizona, a community development corporation called Chicanos Por La Causa offers educational and training services to promote employment in one of that city's poor, largely Hispanic neighborhoods.

A national organization specializing in what it calls "bootstrap capitalism" is Trickle Up, a nonprofit program located in New York City. It currently provides seed-money grants to more than 300 "microenterprise" businesses in the U.S. — mainly in low-income neighborhoods — including a television repair business in Davenport, Iowa, a blacksmith in Ithaca, New York, and a T-shirt business in Bridgeport, Connecticut. Local community development groups, churches, and other neighborhood organizations often provide training and other support.

Daniel Delehanty, deputy director of Trickle Up, says this is becoming an important option "for people and communities to become economicly sufficient." He contrasts it with government programs that take people off welfare and then place them in dead-end, low-paying jobs. "We can help entrepreneurs build business skills and collateral," he argues.

More than 30 African-American and Latino churches in Sacramento County, California, have formed a coalition to move local residents from welfare to work — or toward owning their own businesses through microenterprise grants. They also sponsor job-readiness programs in partnership with local government and local employers.

Yet this new group, known as the Sacramento Valley Organizing Community, has been careful not to rely on government funds which might lead to losing their independence. For them, autonomy and a chance to build their own community comes first. "Government agencies worked with us because we pressed them," says the Rev. Cornelius Taylor, Jr. "We said we are part of the community and we want to serve the community, and if you meet us halfway, we'll come the other half."

Darlene Vargas, a recent graduate of the program, who had previously been on welfare for six years, emerged with a can-do spirit. "Before this program," she explains, "I could have been the mouse over there against the wall where nobody would see me. Now my self-esteem is off the chart. There's nothing I can't do."

For Further Reading / Build Self-Identity First

- John Hope Franklin, ***Race and History: Selected Essays*** (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990).
- Alvin M. Josephy Jr., ***The Indian Heritage of America*** (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1991).
- Marcelo M. Suarez-Orozco, Ed., ***Crossings: Mexican Immigration from Interdisciplinary Perspectives*** (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998).
- Amy Tan, ***The Joy Luck Club*** (New York: Putnam Publishing Group, 1989).

Open All Doors to Everyone

Two boys live and play in the same subdivision in Gastonia, North Carolina.

Maplewood and South Orange are two lovely, tree-lined, New Jersey suburbs about half an hour by train from New York City, with a combined population of nearly 40,000. A few years ago several community leaders in the adjoining towns became concerned about an emerging problem: demographics were changing in the area and the two towns were becoming increasingly segregated by race. The number of blacks and Hispanics (many of them immigrants from Haiti) in Maplewood and South Orange had grown to more than a quarter of the population, but the vast majority resided on the east side of the two towns while the west side remained more than 90 percent white.

Property values had continued to rise and the local schools were still ranked among the best in the state. The community could have stood by and done nothing; there were no court orders,few public voices crying out in protest. Instead, they decided to take a pro-active,pro-integration position,because "we didn't want the trend to segregation to continue," as Barbara Heisler Williams, head of the new Community Coalition, puts it.

First,they created a study group to examine the issue and enlisted outside experts to advise them. Then they established a Racial Balance Task Force to "create unity out of diversity"and stem the tide of segregation.It encourages real estate brokers to show homes to members of all races in all neighborhoods — and tests local realtors' practices to make sure there is no "racial steering." The task force also promotes community dialogue on racial issues through an open-ended series of forums and social events, and encourages civic organizations to add people of color to their all-white boards.

Former New Jersey governor Thomas Kean singled out Maplewood/South Orange in the final report of the President's Initiative on Race."We're on the cutting edge here," school superintendent Dr. Ralph Lieber explains,"because these are the

kinds of problems the whole nation will eventually have to face."

Local residents took special pride when Lauryn Hill, who was raised in South Orange and attended public schools there,captured an unprecedented six Grammy Awards in 1999. She has turned her girlhood home into a recording studio — and lives in another house nearby. "I think her success really helps legitimize our community and its diversity," comments town official William Calabrese. "We want to show the world that our town can thrive with all colors and creeds, and Ms. Hill is helping us do that."

Going Forward Together

Many who favor the third approach applaud intervention to promote integration — an idea whose time has not passed, they feel.Our first two approaches tolerate, and in some cases encourage, a certain degree of separation between races and ethnic groups. Our final approach,in contrast, argues that racial problems can only be alleviated by working together to promote dialogue,increase opportunity, resist segregation — and address the root causes of social inequality.

Or, as Julian Bond,chairman of the board of NAACP, puts it: "We go forward fastest when we go forward together."

People supporting the first approach say that race relations will improve dramatically if we take a colorblind approach and stop focusing on race. The second approach suggests that respecting the diversity in America and giving minority communities more autonomy will eventually solve the problem. But this third approach says that both of those options leave the separation between the races pretty much intact,with only the hope that this will change in time.Simply being against discrimination doesn't necessarily bring people together.

A truly colorblind society, *Newsweek* columnist Ellis Cose asserts,cannot exist as long as whites and nonwhites "live, in large measure,in totally different, color-coded worlds." Proponents of the third approach believe that the only way to resolve the problem with lasting effect is through aggressive intervention: from community dialogue to effective social programs.

Persistent, Deep Problems of Discrimination

Those who favor this approach acknowledge that there has been much progress in the area of race relations and economic equality in the past decade — but they insist that the glass is still half empty. As David Shipler, author of *A Country of Strangers*, said recently, things have gotten better and worse.He points out that today there are more nonwhite corporate executives — and more nonwhite prison inmates — than there were ten years ago. "But which number do you choose to focus on?"he wonders.

And even when people of color ascend to the upper-middle-class it does not guarantee that they will escape prejudice.Jarobin Gilbert,a high-ranking television executive who graduated from Harvard,once said,"It's pretty hard to feel like you're mainstream when you're wearing $2,000 worth of clothes and you can't catch a cab at night."

Other longstanding problems endure, according to proponents of the third approach. Racial profiling — when police target individuals for investigation mainly because of the color their skin — remains a problem in many communities. Federal civil rights officials investigated New Jersey state troopers after reports that black motorists in large numbers were being pulled over for no clear

What Should Be Done ?

- Rigorously enforce civil rights and desegregation statutes and discrimination laws, and reverse the recent reduction in resources for many agencies involved in this effort. Monitor banks and real estate companies to promote fair lending and open housing, and urge vigorous prosecution of violators.
- Crack down on "profiling" and police abuses in minority communities and provide new channels for complaints and feedback from the community.
- Make sure that local organizations and clubs are truly open to all races. Promote efforts to end lingering segregation in all its forms, and discourage voluntary segregation.
- Mend, but don't end, affirmative action in hiring, awarding contracts, and in college admissions.
- Form or join local groups or churches aimed at improving dialogue and bringing the races together.
- Use media extensively to further discussion and understanding, and break down stereotypes.
- Continue programs that attack the root causes of poverty, which falls disproportionately on minorities and in turn causes stereotyping and racism. That means allocating ample resources to early education, health programs, job training, and job creation, among other areas.

Court Decisions Affecting Civil Rights of Minorities

1857 Dred Scott v. Sandford. The Supreme Court holds that African Americans are not citizens, Congress cannot prohibit slavery in the territories, and residence in a free state does not confer freedom on African-Americans. The decision hastens the start of the Civil War by sweeping aside legal barriers to the expansion of slavery and inciting the anger of Northerners.

1883 Civil Rights Cases. The Supreme Court strikes down the Civil Rights Act of 1875, saying that "social" rights are beyond federal control, but blacks cannot be excluded from juries.

1896 Plessy v. Ferguson. The Supreme Court decides that if segregated railroad cars offer equal accommodations, then such segregation is not discriminatory against blacks and does not deprive them of their Fourteenth Amendment rights to equal protection under the law. The "separate but equal" doctrine is not struck down until 1954 in Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka.

1915 Guinn v. United States. The Supreme Court rules that the "grandfather clause," which disenfranchised most African-Americans, is unconstitutional. The clause, adopted by Oklahoma and Maryland, exempted citizens from certain voter qualifications if their grandfathers had voted; obviously, this could not apply to blacks whose grandparents lived before the ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment.

1940 Hansberry v. Lee. The Supreme Court rules that African-Americans cannot be prevented from buying homes in white neighborhoods.

1954 Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka. The Supreme Court unanimously overrules Plessy v. Ferguson and declares that segregated public schools violate the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

1960 Gomillion v. Lightfoot. The Supreme Court rules that the drawing of election districts so that blacks constitute a minority in all districts is a violation of the Fifteenth Amendment.

1971 Griggs v. Duke Power Co. The Supreme Court makes its first ruling on the job-bias provisions of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, declaring that "objective" criteria, unrelated to job skills, for hiring workers are discriminatory if they result in minorities' being relatively disadvantaged.

reason. New Jersey Governor Christine Whitman dismissed the state police superintendent for linking certain types of drug trafficking to specific ethnic or racial groups. President Clinton has called for an end to racial profiling and ordered an investigation of the extent of profiling.

Although statistics suggest that many communities across the country have become integrated, the areas where most people of color live have become even more segregated. Approach Three argues. The black, Hispanic, and Asian middle class may be growing, but most of these families cluster in suburbs where their neighbors resemble them. And today, 86 percent of white suburban Americans live in neighborhoods that are less than 1 percent black.

We have not yet turned the page on the long history of segregated housing promoted by developers, banks, insurance companies — and through the choices of white home buyers. Studies indicate that somewhere between one-quarter to one-half of all blacks and Hispanics face discrimination in attempting to rent or purchase a home. In a "redlining" case in Virginia, a Richmond jury ordered Nationwide Insurance to pay millions of dollars to a local housing group that accused the company of not selling policies to many qualified black residents.

Meanwhile, high school graduation rates for Hispanics are only half that of whites and 40 percent of black children remain mired in poverty, proponents of this third approach point out.

Referring to life on reservations, the Native-American writer Sherman Alexie says, "We're talking about Third World conditions, fourth world conditions ... I didn't have running water until I was 7 years old ... and there are no models of success in any sort of field for Indians. We don't have any of that."

Racial violence — including attacks directed at whites — appears to be on the upswing, according to Morris Dees of the Southern Poverty Law Center, possibly fueled by the proliferation of Internet sites sponsored by hate groups. According to a recent Justice Department study, American Indians, unlike whites and blacks, are more likely to be the victims of violent crime committed by members of a race other than their own. Racism against Native Americans remains rampant on the edges of many reservations, according to Professor Sidney Harring, an expert on Indian crime.

And what about the so-called "model minority"? Although Asian-Americans, as a whole,

appear to be doing very well,there is another side to the story, according to supporters of this third approach.While they are more likely than whites to become doctors and engineers,they are also more likely to be found in low-paying jobs in the service industry or in textiles.Many of the poorest are paid off the books in sweat shops or restaurants."People think Asians in America are doing so well," says Tina Tran of Bethesda,Maryland. "In fact,many of the new refugees have the same problems as Central American kids: They came from rural poverty, their parents work late and are poorly educated." Half of the Vietnamese in California are on public assistance.Many Asian-Americans complain that they are stereotyped as good workers who are not capable managers.

Communication is Crucial

What is to be done about all this?

Those who favor the third approach would argue,first,that "intervention" begins at home.In our lives we can make a conscious effort to get to know people of other races — what Studs Terkel calls "aggressive civility" — and promote community dialogue. The report of the President's Initiative calls negative racial stereotypes "one of the most formidable barriers to bridging our continual racial divide" and argues that one of the most effective ways to confront and dispel racial stereotypes "is through continuous,meaningful interaction among people of different racial backgrounds." In particular, young Americans' generally open and optimistic views of race relations must be channeled in positive directions.

"You cannot judge another person unless you know something about the world they live in," a Texas mother said at a focus group on race."You run the risk of insulting people if you don't know what they're doing, their lifestyles, the way they think. We all have to live together."

When the Community Building Task Force in Charlotte, North Carolina,kicked off a series of discussions on this subject — leading to a conference attended by more than 600 residents — a local columnist, Tommy Tomlinson, observed: "Race weighs heavy on all of us.But how do you get strong? You pick up a heavy weight over and over again."

Indeed, there are hundreds of groups in communities across the country promoting communication between the races or addressing racial inequality. Many of them engage the business community and government agencies — both the pub-

Court Decisions Affecting Civil Rights of Minorities

1971 Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education. The Supreme Court unanimously upholds school busing for the purpose of racial balance in situations where segregation has been official policy and the school authorities have not come up with a viable alternative to busing.

1978 University of California Regents v. Bakke. The Supreme Court requires that the University of California Medical School at Davis admit white applicant Allan Bakke, who had argued that the school's minority admissions program made him a victim of "reverse discrimination."

1989 City of Richmond v. J.A. Croson. The Supreme Court declares illegal a Richmond, Virginia, set-aside program mandating that 30 percent of the city's public works funds go to minority-owned firms. Such programs are only legal if they redress "identified discrimination."

1991-92 U.S. Supreme Court issues Oklahoma and Georgia rulings, saying schools don't have to bus to overcome school segregation caused by segregated housing patterns.

1999 September 9, 1999: Cappachione v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg schools et al: Federal District Court Judge Robert Potter rules in Charlotte that the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school system must stop using race to assign students to schools, effectively ending court-ordered busing mandated in the landmark Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education case in 1971. The case was heard before the Fourth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals on June 7, 2000. The appeals ruling is pending.

1999 September 24, 1999: Tuttle v. Arlington County (Va.) School Board. The U.S. Supreme Court rules that the school system could not use a weighted lottery in admissions to promote racial and ethnic diversity.

1999 October 6, 1999: Eisenberg v. Montgomery County (Md.) Public Schools: The Supreme Court rules the school board could not deny a student's request to transfer to a magnet school because of his race.

Source: The New York Public Library American History Desk Reference

Grace Atkinson, Jane Summey, and Genevieve Cummings share a laugh between sessions of a 1997 community-building conference in Charlotte, North Carolina.

lic and private sectors. Working toward a common goal avoids the "blame game" and promotes racial tolerance and acceptance, according to the third approach.

The Ford Foundation's Changing Relations Project recently studied programs in six communities that promote cooperation among immigrants and established residents. It concluded that the most successful efforts rarely have an overt "racial" agenda; but the process of working together on shared, multicultural projects, reduces tension and competition and builds "bonds of trust among groups."

The Center for Living Democracy in Vermont identified nearly 100 interracial dialogue groups in more than 30 states. One of its directors, Jonathan Hutson says, "We have shouted at each other, muttered at each other, but have we truly sat and conversed with each other? No. This is new. And it's working.... It's not about funding or about waiting for permission from elected officials. Ordinary people are getting together and finding their own solutions." The issues may be "macro" or "micro."

- The Central Minnesota Community Foundation formed a new project called ADAPT in the city of St. Cloud, which had gained the nickname "White Cloud" because of its perceived hostility to people of color. ADAPT now provides resources and leadership development to promote diversity as a shared value in the community.
- The Multicultural Center of Northwest Arkansas was formed in 1995 by business, social service, and government leaders to address the needs of the growing immigrant (largely Hispanic) population. It provides employment and housing assistance and develops cultural understanding in both directions — using interpreters to help the immigrants get a better sense of their new home and helping native Arkansans better appreciate the newcomers.
- At a recent forum on race at the University of Mississippi, two women, one white and one black, confronted an angry man and calmly explained why waving the Confederate flag at football games was offensive to many students — and he agreed not to wave the flag anymore.
- After a local newspaper analyzed the rocky state of local race relations, residents in Akron, Ohio, formed the Coming Together Project, which soon gained national attention. It has grown into a coalition of 200 organizations committed to improving race relations through workshops, church activities, and youth programs.

Attack Racist Habits, Patterns

"To establish a new framework," Harvard professor Cornel West explains, "we need to begin with a frank acknowledgment of the basic humanness and Americanness of each of us.... If we go down, we go down together." But proponents of this third approach recognize that dialogue and citizen action can only go so far, so they also favor more systemic efforts, by government and business, to promote integration and equality, and eradicate the hopelessness that pervades so many minority communities.

After decades of successful desegregation, educators must not backslide and allow most schools to again become overwhelmingly one race, proponents of the third approach insist. While it is true that parents of all races identify quality teaching as the top educational priority, surveys show that they also believe strongly in an integrated classroom. They also recognize that black schools on average have poorer facilities and fewer resources, and students do less well academically than students at white schools. This must be remedied. Remedial classes for those hoping to go to college should be continued.

"If there can be no consideration of race and ethnicity, many schools that have worked very hard over the years to become diverse will slide back to very segregated patterns," says Julie Underwood of the National School Boards Association.

At the same time, public officials must rigorously enforce civil rights statutes, strengthen laws against hate crimes, and watchdog banks and realtors to help break new patterns of residential segregation, according to Approach Three. They must also crack down on police abuses in minority communities, end racial profiling, and provide new channels for complaints and feedback from the community. As Randall Kennedy, author of *Race, Crime and the Law*, puts it, we must have "a legal system that looks beyond looks."

A New Affirmative Action

What about racial preferences? Racial and ethnic quotas, Approach Three argues, must be eliminated but affirmative action should be mended — not ended.

Contrary to popular belief, most longtime critics of affirmative action stop short of calling for its complete dismantling. As one of those critics, Nathan Glazer, recently observed, what "gives pause to opponents" is "the clear knowledge" that the end of affirmative action means a radical reduction in the number of blacks and Hispanics attending select colleges, universities, and professional schools. If that occurs, he maintains, "the predominant pathway to well-paying and influential jobs" for these individuals would all but disappear. He calls this "a disaster for race relations" and for the prospect of a fuller integration of minorities into the mainstream of society.

Colin Powell, a model American success story, acknowledges that he received special preferences in rising in the military to become chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Affirmative action is the major reason why so many people of color have climbed into the middle class in recent years. From 1970 to 1990, for example, the number of black doctors climbed from about 6,000 to nearly 21,000. All Americans will suffer if that advance is reversed, supporters of this third approach claim.

But affirmative action should be just one of several ways to identify qualified minority candidates for jobs or school admissions. Other innovative remedies should be tried. For example, the Texas legislature recently ordered that any student in the state who finished in the top 10 percent of his or her class must be admitted to one of the two top state schools, no matter what their SAT scores. This gives blacks and Hispanics — and whites from rural areas — a better chance to attend these schools.

And, crucially, the state is also toughening standards in lower grades so more minorities become college-capable. As Lani Guinier comments, the Texas approach is "helping shift an increasingly narrow debate over affirmative action into a wider public discussion on education."

More Job Training, Antipoverty Efforts

At the same time, according to Approach Three, the government must renew or expand social programs to attack the root causes of poverty, which fall disproportionately on minorities (and, in turn, fosters stereotyping and racism). As author Nicholas Lemann put it, this constitutes "the great obvious failure in our domestic life and the most pressing piece of unfinished business in our long-running quest to solve the American dilemma."

Higher Education

Bachelor's degrees conferred, by racial/ethnic group 1976-1997
Percentage distribution of degrees conferred to U.S. citizens

YEAR	White, non-Hispanic	African American, non-Hispanic	Hispanic	Asian, non-Hispanic	American Indian/ Alaskan Native
1976-77	89.5	6.5	2.1	1.5	.4
1986-87	87.5	5.9	2.8	3.4	.4
1990-91	85.9	6.2	3.5	4.0	.4
1993-94	82.7	7.4	4.4	4.9	.5
1996-97	79.5	8.3	6.5	6.0	.7

Source: U.S. Department of Education

Dangers, Drawbacks, Trade-offs

This approach is unnecessary, and represents tired, old thinking,not current realities. Unlike years ago, there is little institutional racism today, and minorities who are qualified and willing to work hard can get a fair opportunity at every level of society.

Aggressive government intervention in attacking socials ills has failed in the past.Massive social spending is expensive and encourages dependency on a government "sugar daddy" to solve problems.

Efforts to improve communication between ethnic groups won't have wide impact. "Dialogue"can only benefit those who participate. Many people,of all races, simply do not want to talk about these difficult issues. Many others are paralyzed by pessimism and feel nothing will be accomplished.

Forcing a blended society is unrealistic and takes away the basic human right to live as you wish, among people you choose to live near.

Affirmative action is based on approaches that are fundamentally unfair. Inevitably, someone else suffers when another is given a "break" in the classroom,in the job market — anywhere.It makes for resentment and racial conflict.

That means allocating adequate resources for job training and job creation (especially for former welfare recipients),higher spending on education (especially early education),as well as economic development for Native Americans — while re-evaluating current antipoverty programs that are not working.

As Martin Luther King, Jr. said,one cannot ask people who don't have boots to pull themselves up by their bootstraps.Because this is costly, government agencies must forge innovative partnerships with local businesses and private organizations to encourage them to shoulder more of the load in job training, improving housing and health care,and moving people from welfare to work.

The Complexion of Where We Live

"I would love to see the goal of integration be boisterously set again," essayist Roger Rosenblat observes, an opinion that underlines all of the arguments advanced by advocates of the third approach.

Thirty years ago,the Cleveland suburb of Shaker Heights did just that.It began an integration process that has been hailed as a model for others to follow. Pockets of segregation remain, and while "not perfect,Shaker Heights is an example of the possibilities for promoting integration and better race relations in a community," says John Yinger, author of ***Closed Doors, Opportunities Lost.*** And,indeed, the job of preventing resegregation in Shaker Heights is never over, according to local officials.

A few years back,in a landmark case, a federal judge ordered the city of Yonkers, New York, to desegregate.Residents protested as public and subsidized housing was built in nearly all-white neighborhoods and many experts predicted years of tension and "white flight." But this did not come to pass and now few complaints are heard. "In the beginning, I was against it," says Edith Reznick,who lives near one of the new low-income developments, "but now, I don't mind it at all."

Residents of Maplewood and South Orange, New Jersey, as we have seen, decided to take action before court orders were necessary. Now community leaders are confident that "creating unity"is here to stay. And they feel they've already won most of the battle."By openly discussing race, people realize that we all cut our lawns,take care of our homes,and want a good education for our kids," says Celia King,a hospital administrator and Maplewood committeewoman. "It's inspiring to hear people talk about something as delicate as race for the first time in their lives."

For Further Reading /Open All Doors to Everyone

- David Cole, ***No Equal Justice: Race and Class in the American Criminal Justice System*** (New York: New Press,1999).
- Cornell West, ***Race Matters*** (Boston: Beacon Press,1993).
- Cornell West and Henry Louis Gates, ***The Future of the Race,*** (New York: Random House Value,1997).

In your community...

Can you think of an example of how racial or ethnic tension and division gets in the way of your community working well? Please describe.

Can you think of an example of how racial or ethnic tension and division affects you or prevents you from doing things in your daily life? Please describe.

Can you think of an example of progress you've seen in your community on racial or ethnic problems? Please explain.

Comparing Approaches

We have come a long way in the United States, but lingering racial and ethnic discrimination continues to strain the bonds that hold us together. It is time we set our minds to achieving Martin Luther King, Jr.'s dream of true equality. How can we best do this? To help citizens consider this tough question, this deliberation guide considers the issue from three different perspectives,and suggests approaches by which the problems might be resolved. Each approach offers a different diagnosis of what's wrong. Each provides a direction for public action. Each includes ideas and proposals that are drawn from across the political spectrum. An outline for talking through this troublesome issue appears on these pages.

Approach 1

Look Beyond Race and Ethnicity

Focus on what unites us,not what divides us. We will all benefit if we stop seeing everything through the lens of race and ethnicity. There has been great progress in race relations and there will be even more if we eliminate racial and ethnic preferences.Give everyone a fair, equal chance,but treat everyone the same — as Americans. This means immigrants, too, who need to assimilate rapidly.

What Should Be Done:

- Set standards for performance in school and on the job to which everyone can aspire and upon which everyone is judged.
- Guarantee everyone the opportunity to compete, and ensure that no one is discriminated against based on race or ethnic origin.
- Eliminate quotas and preferential treatment based on race or ethnicity.

- Reassert that English is the one, official language of the United States. That includes in classrooms and businesses.
- Focus on and celebrate our common American principles and shared values.

Dangers, Drawbacks, Trade-offs:

- The cultural split between races will grow wider. Discrimination will be perpetuated in housing,on the job, in schools,and in other important ways.
- The underclass of Americans will continue to grow, and the income gap will widen.
- Some people need extra help to even have a fair chance to compete,and without that boost, they will lose.
- Recent immigrants will suffer. Demanding immediate assimilation into our complex society is unfair and unrealistic.

Approach 2

Build Self-identity First

To reduce ethnic and racial tensions, we must first build racial and cultural identity within the individual groups that comprise life in America. The simple fact is that our society is multicultural. We will never learn to get along with others well until we first know who we are,as individuals who belong to different ethnic histories.Only through making sure that our particular group has its place in the sun,is recognized and strong, can we relate to others. We must allow communities and schools to set their own course,even if it means accepting some self-segregation.

What Should Be Done:

- Let people decide when they want to intermingle and when they don't — professionally or socially.
- Provide tax breaks,incentives, loans to give minority enterprises an opportunity to develop and prosper.
- Permit communities to decide school curricula and textbooks that reflect their values, history, and culture.
- Require schools and employers to provide bilingual education wherever needed.
- Devote time, space, and money to celebratory and educational festivals that focus on ethnic groups and their culture.

Dangers, Drawbacks, Trade-offs:

- This will result in more separation and less contact with members of other ethnic groups, which will increase misunderstanding and conflict.
- Some groups will inevitably be left out — how do you decide which group deserves preferential treatment or its own holiday.
- Our common "American" values and principles will be submersed and become secondary to minority values.We will think of ourselves as hyphenated Americans.
- It opens the door for political correctness to run rampant.

Approach 3

Open All Doors to Everyone

We must all take an active part in integrating our society, and we must not encourage or accept racial and ethnic separatism.Finishing the job of integration — in our schools, our offices, and our neighborhoods — should be one of our highest priorities.Only through living, working,and going to school together, will prejudice begin to subside. This also means making continuous efforts to meet, talk,and understand each other better.

What Should Be Done:

- Attack lingering segregation practices in housing, real estate, and education through every means at our disposal, including strong legal and financial penalties for offenders.
- Forge innovative government-business-private organization partnerships to provide more job training,improved housing, and health care.
- Continue social programs across the nation that promote economic opportunity and social justice for ethnic minorities; finance them adequately to do the job.
- Establish community sites for regular dialogue to address tensions, conflicts,and misunderstandings.
- Use media extensively to further discussion and understanding,and to break down stereotypes.

Dangers, Drawbacks, Trade-offs:

- Large-scale social programs are too expensive and inefficient,and perpetuate a culture of dependency.
- Forcing a blended society is unrealistic and takes away the basic human right to live as you wish, among people you choose to live near.
- Preferential treatment and affirmative action programs are inherently unfair to those who aren't given a special boost.
- Forcing people together in every setting doesn't work and will immediately cause more friction.

What Are National Issues Forums?

National Issues Forums bring together citizens to deliberate and make choices about challenging social and political issues of the day. They have addressed issues such as the economy, education, healthcare, foreign affairs, poverty, and crime.

Throughout the nation, thousands of civic, service, and religious organizations, as well as libraries, high schools, and colleges, sponsor forums. The sponsoring organizations select topics based on citizens' concerns, then design and coordinate their own forum programs.

A different kind of talk

There is no "typical" forum in length, number of participants, or frequency. They range from small study circles to large gatherings modeled after town meetings, but all are different from everyday conversations and adversarial debates.

Since forums seek to increase understanding of complicated issues, participants need not start out with detailed knowledge of an issue. Forum organizers distribute issue books such as this one, featuring a nonpartisan overview of an issue and a choice of several public responses. By presenting each issue in a nonpartisan way, forums encourage participants to take a fresh look at the issues and at their own convictions.

In the forums, participants share their opinions, their concerns, and their knowledge. With the help of moderators and the issue books, participants weigh several possible ways for society to address a problem. They analyze each choice, the arguments for and against it, and the trade-offs, costs and consequences of the choice. Moderators encourage participants, as they gravitate to one option or another, to examine their basic values as individuals and as community members.

Common ground for action

In this deliberative practice, participants often accept choices that are not entirely consistent with their individual wishes and that impose costs they had not initially considered. This happens because NIF forums help people see issues from different points of view; participants use deliberation to discover, not persuade or advocate. The best deliberative forums can help participants move toward shared, public judgments about important issues.

Participants may hold sharply different opinions and beliefs, but in the forums they discuss their attitudes, concerns, and convictions about each issue and, as a group, seek to resolve their conflicting priorities and principles. In this way, participants move from making individual choices to making choices as members of a community — the kinds of choices from which public action may result.

Building community through public deliberation

In a democracy, citizens must come together to find answers they can all live with — while acknowledging that individuals have differing opinions. Forums help people find the areas where their interests and goals overlap. This allows a public voice to emerge that can give direction to public policy.

The forums are nonpartisan and do not advocate a particular solution to any public issue, nor should they be confused with referenda or public opinion polls. Rather, the forums enable diverse groups of Americans to determine together what direction they want to take, what kinds of action and legislation they favor and what, for their common good, they oppose.

Moving to action

Forums can lead to several kinds of public action. Generally, a public voice emerges from forums, and that helps set the government's compass, since forum results are shared with elected officials each year. Also, as a result of attending forums, individuals and groups may decide individually, or with others, to help remedy a public problem through citizen actions outside of government.

How to start a forum

Forums are initiated at the local level by civic and educational organizations. For information about starting a forum and using our materials, write to National Issues Forum Research, 100 Commons Road, Dayton, Ohio 45459-2777, or call 800-433-7834. On the Internet: http://www.nifi.org.

Racial and Ethnic Tensions

What Should We Do?

One of the reasons people participate in National Issues Forums is that they want others to know how they feel about an issue and what they think should be done.So that we can present reports on your thoughts about the issue, we'd like you to fill out this Pre-Forum Questionnaire before the forum begins. Your forum moderator will then ask you to fill out the Post-Forum Questionnaire at the end of the forum.

1. Which statement best describes what you think should be done about racial and ethnic tensions?
   - a. I am not at all sure what should be done. ☐
   - b. I have a general sense of what should be done. ☐
   - c. I have a definite opinion about what should be done. ☐

2. Do you agree or disagree with the statements below?	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Not sure
a. Too many people still see everything through the lens of racial and ethnic discrimination.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Special treatment that is based on race or ethnic background is unfair and causes more friction and resentment.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. The cards are stacked against most people when it comes to understanding, preserving, and promoting their ethnic culture and its values.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Acting "colorblind" isn't realistic and doesn't get us anywhere.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. In many ways,prejudice and discrimination are as common as ever in housing,education,business, and social settings.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. As a nation, we are sliding backward on the hard-fought progress made during the civil rights movement and over the last three decades.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3. What else troubles you about problems of racial and ethnic tensions? Please explain.

_____

_____

_____

4. Do you favor or oppose each of these actions?	Strongly favor	Somewhat favor	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	Not sure
a. Set standards for performance and promotion,in school and on the job, that apply to everyone.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Insist that English is the one, official language of the United States, in business and the classroom.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Provide tax breaks,incentives,and loans to give minority businesses an opportunity to develop and prosper.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Allow communities to decide school curricula and textbooks that reflect their values,history, and culture.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Strongly attack remaining practices in housing and education that separate people based on race or ethnicity.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Provide more job training,better housing, and health care to minorities through government or private partnerships.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

5. Are you male or female? ☐ Male ☐ Female

6. How much schooling have you completed?
☐ Less than 6th grade ☐ 6th - 8th grade ☐ Some high school ☐ High school graduate
☐ Some college ☐ College graduate ☐ Graduate school

7. Are you:
☐ African-American ☐ Asian-American ☐ Hispanic ☐ Native American ☐ White
☐ Other (specify) _____

8. How old are you?
☐ 17 or younger ☐ 18 - 29 ☐ 30 - 49 ☐ 50 - 64 ☐ 65 or older

9. Have you attended an NIF forum before? ☐ Yes ☐ No

10. If "yes", how many forums have you attended?
☐ 1 - 3 ☐ 4 - 6 ☐ 7 or more ☐ Not sure

11. In which part of the United States do you live?
☐ Northeast ☐ South ☐ Midwest ☐ West
☐ Southwest ☐ Other

12. What is your ZIP code? _____

Please give this form to the forum leader, or mail it to National Issues Forums Research, 100 Commons Road, Dayton, Ohio 45459-2777.

Racial and Ethnic Tensions

What Should We Do?

Now that you've had a chance to participate in a forum on this issue, we'd like to know what you are thinking. Your opinions, along with those of thousands of others who participated in these forums, will be reflected in a summary report that will be available to all citizens, including those who took part in the forums, as well as officeholders, members of the news media, and others in your community. Since we're interested in whether you have changed your mind about certain aspects of the issue, a few of the questions will be the same as those you answered earlier.

1. Do you favor or oppose the statements listed below?	Strongly favor	Somewhat favor	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	Not sure
a. We should eliminate quotas and special treatment based on racial or ethnic origin, EVEN IF it means discrimination would continue on the job, in schools, and in neighborhoods.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. We should let people decide when they want to be together and when they don't, EVEN IF it means there would be more segregation where people live and work.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. We should finish the job of full integration, EVEN IF that would mean spending more tax money on programs, laws, and enforcement.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2. Do you favor or oppose each of these actions?	Strongly favor	Somewhat favor	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	Not sure
a. In school and on the job, set standards for performance and promotion that apply to everyone.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Insist that English is the one, official language of the United States, in business and the classroom.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Provide tax breaks, incentives, and loans to give minority enterprises an opportunity to develop and prosper.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Allow communities to decide school curricula and textbooks that reflect their values, history, and culture.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Strongly attack remaining practices in housing and education that separate people based on race or ethnicity.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Provide more job training, better housing, and health care to minorities through government or private partnerships.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3. Do you agree or disagree with the statements below?	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Not sure
a. Too many people still see everything through the lens of racial and ethnic discrimination.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Special treatment that is based on race or ethnic background is unfair and causes more friction and resentment.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. The cards are stacked against most people when it comes to understanding, preserving, and promoting their ethnic culture and its values.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Acting "colorblind" isn't realistic and doesn't get us anywhere.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. In many ways, prejudice and discrimination are as common as ever in housing, education, business, and social settings.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. As a nation, we are sliding backward on the hard-fought progress made during the civil rights movement and over the last three decades.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

4. Which statement best describes what you think should be done about racial and ethnic tensions?
   a. I am not at all sure what should be done. ☐
   b. I have a general sense of what should be done. ☐
   c. I have a definite opinion about what should be done. ☐

5. What principles or deeply held beliefs should guide our approach to racial and ethnic tensions and divisions? Please explain.

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. Are you thinking differently about the issue of racial and ethnic tensions, now that you have participated in the forum? ☐ Yes ☐ No
   If yes, please explain.

_____

_____

_____

_____

7. Do you see ways for people to work on this issue that you didn't see before? ☐ Yes ☐ No
   Please explain.

_____

_____

_____

_____

8. What, if anything, might you do differently as a result of this forum?

_____

_____

_____

_____

9. What else troubles you about problems of racial and ethnic tensions? Please explain.

_____

_____

_____

_____

10. What is your ZIP code? _____

Please give this form to the forum leader, or mail it to National Issues Forums Research, 100 Commons Road, Dayton, Ohio 45459-2777.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE